

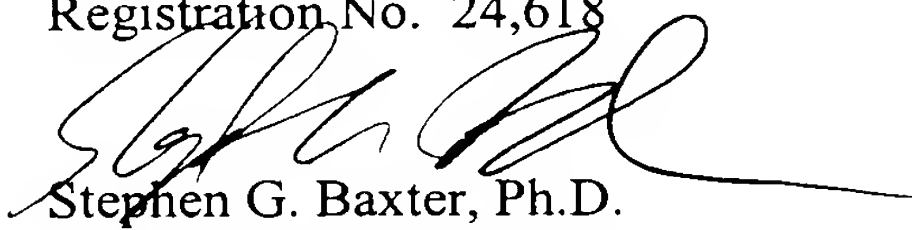
REMARKS

Applicants submit that the application is ready for examination on the merits, and early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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**MARKED-UP COPY OF**  
**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**  
**FILED ON DECEMBER 31, 2001**

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 1, on new line after the title, insert:

This application is a continuation of International Patent Application PCT/JP00/04298, which was filed on June 29, 2000, and which claims priority to Japanese Patent Application 11-187959, which was filed on July 1, 1999, and to Japanese Patent Application 2000-71706, which was filed on March 15, 2000, all of which are incorporated herein by reference.

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

--18. (Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising as an active ingredient a heterocyclic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof according to [any one of claims 1 to 17] claim 1.

19. (Amended) An AP-1 activation inhibitor or a NF-kappaB activation inhibitor comprising as an active ingredient a heterocyclic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof according to [any one of claims 1 to 17] claim 1.

20. (Amended) An inflammatory cytokine production inhibitor, a production inhibitor for matrix metalloprotease or an inflammatory cell adhesion factor expression

inhibitor comprising as an active ingredient a heterocyclic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof according to [any one of claims 1 to 17] claim 1.--